

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 478

September 29, 1995, 6:06 p.m.
Page S-14640 Temp. Record

COMMERCE-JUSTICE-STATE APPROPRIATIONS/Abortion Funding in Prison

SUBJECT: Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1996 . . . H.R. 2076. Smith motion to table the Specter amendment No. 2841.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 52-44

SYNOPSIS: As reported, H.R. 2076, the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies appropriations bill for fiscal year 1996, will provide a total of \$26.525 billion in new budget authority, which is 1 percent less than provided for fiscal year (FY) 1995, and which is \$4.634 billion less than the Administration requested. The Justice Department and the Judiciary will receive substantial increases in funding, and the Commerce Department, the State Department, and related agencies will receive substantial reductions in funding.

The Specter amendment would strike the prohibition on using funds from this Act to pay for abortions for Federal prisoners except in cases in which the life of the mother would be endangered by carrying the fetus to term or in cases of rape.

Following debate, Senator Smith moved to table the Specter amendment. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

If Senators believe that the American taxpayers should be forced to pay for abortion-on-demand for Federal prisoners then they should vote in favor of the Specter amendment. We most assuredly do not favor such a use of taxpayer funds. Americans are very deeply divided over the issue of abortion. Even the most ardent proponents of abortion show their ambivalence by their oft-stated desire to make the incidence of abortion rare. The vast majority of Americans strongly oppose using abortion as a method of birth control, strongly oppose sex selection and late term abortions, and strongly oppose public funding of abortion. Tens of millions of Americans firmly believe in the inalienable right to life of unborn children. Given these facts, it is not very constructive to pretend that this issue has been settled just because the Supreme Court overturned the laws in 50 States when it discovered the right to an

(See other side)

YEAS (52)			NAYS (44)			NOT VOTING (4)	
Republicans (43 or 83%)		Democrats (9 or 20%)	Republicans (9 or 17%)		Democrats (35 or 80%)	Republicans (2)	Democrats (2)
Abraham	Helms	Biden	Brown	Akaka	Kerrey	Bennett ⁻²	Glenn ⁻²
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Breaux	Campbell	Baucus	Kerry	Shelby ⁻²	Johnston ⁻²
Bond	Inhofe	Bryan	Chafee	Bingaman	Kohl		
Burns	Kassebaum	Exon	Cohen	Boxer	Lautenberg		
Coats	Kempthorne	Ford	Jeffords	Bradley	Leahy		
Cochran	Kyl	Graham	Packwood	Bumpers	Levin		
Coverdell	Lott	Heflin	Snowe	Byrd	Lieberman		
Craig	Lugar	Nunn	Specter	Conrad	Mikulski		
D'Amato	Mack	Reid	Stevens	Daschle	Moseley-Braun		
DeWine	McCain			Dodd	Moynihan		
Dole	McConnell			Dorgan	Murray		
Domenici	Murkowski			Feingold	Pell		
Faircloth	Nickles			Feinstein	Pryor		
Frist	Pressler			Harkin	Robb		
Gorton	Roth			Hollings	Rockefeller		
Gramm	Santorum			Inouye	Sarbanes		
Grams	Simpson			Kennedy	Simon		
Grassley	Smith				Wellstone		
Gregg	Thomas						
Hatch	Thompson						
Hatfield	Thurmond						
	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

abortion written between the lines of the Constitution (though if our colleagues really wish to go by Supreme Court precedent, they should pay attention to the rulings that public funding of abortion is not required). If Senators think that all Americans, against their most deeply held moral convictions, should be forced to pay for abortion-on-demand, for any reason and at any stage of pregnancy, for women who have been incarcerated for committing Federal felonies, then they should vote in favor of the Specter amendment. If not, they should join us in tabling it.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The bill provision that would be stricken by the Specter amendment contains yet another assault on American women's constitutional right to choose. This time, anti-abortion members have targeted the right of women in prison to have abortions by denying them funding unless they have been raped or their lives are in danger. These women are hardly in a position to earn money; if they enter prison pregnant and destitute, they will be forced by their circumstances to give birth to children they do not want. In many cases, these women themselves are in poor health, are drug abusers, have AIDS, and have other conditions that they know will increase the risk that they will give birth to deformed, sick, or retarded infants. Further, they know that when they give birth their children will be taken from them. We think it would be cruel to deny public funding for abortions for women in such circumstances. The idea of blocking public funding is not new; a prohibition was in effect during the Reagan and Bush Administrations. In late 1993, the prohibition was lifted. Few abortions have resulted; so far this year only 9 abortions have been performed on Federal prisoners, while 21 other prisoners have given birth. These women were able to exercise the choice to which they were entitled because funding was provided; without funding, no real choice would have existed. If Senators believe in upholding the right to have an abortion, they should vote for this amendment.